

# Shakespeare and the Actor's Voice: Close Reading of the Live Performance

FLLOYD KENNEDY

[flloydkennedy@gmail.com](mailto:flloydkennedy@gmail.com)

---

The performance of Shakespeare in Australia has changed greatly in style and interpretation as cultural and social attitudes have shifted over the 250 years since European settlement. This is evident in the way the actors use their voices, which reflects the changing nature of training practices and performance styles over time, but more importantly reveals Shakespeare's performed language as the expression of those specific actors in their own specific time. Examining two productions from the latter part of the twentieth century, a period that witnessed a burgeoning of Australian cultural identity, and subjecting them to the aural equivalent of a close reading, I demonstrate how it is not the accent, but the vocal quality of the actor that is crucial.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, performance, voice, meta-performativity, performative force

O, how wonderful is the human voice! It is indeed the organ of the soul? The intellect of man sits enthroned visibly upon his forehead and in his eye; and the heart of man is written upon his countenance. But the soul reveals itself in the voice only; as God revealed himself to the prophet of old in the still, small voice; and a voice from the burning bush. The soul of man is audible, not visible. A sound alone betrays the flowing of the eternal fountain, invisible to man!<sup>1</sup>

The human voice is a conundrum, a contradiction, and as Longfellow observes, a revelation: the self, if not the very soul, of the speaker made audible.<sup>2</sup> It is material, yet invisible; tangible yet permeable; private and yet public. Voice is created by muscular actions responding to mental, physical and emotional stimuli. It begins inside the body, a unique event that is personal to the self of the creator, then leaves the body to be completely beyond the control of the speaker. Small wonder that many people are reluctant, either knowingly or unconsciously, to speak publicly, to allow their innermost, unadulterated thoughts and attitudes to become available to the outside world by means of a stream of compressed air particles. Yet that is precisely what actors are required to do, with the added challenge when performing

Shakespeare that the sound is to be shaped into a highly structured arrangement of linguistic expression provided by someone from a different time and culture.

Shakespeare has been performed in Australia since the early 1800s, sometimes in the form of reverential homages to nineteenth century traditions, often involving 'doublet and hose' and Received Pronunciation, or RP – otherwise known as Standard British English (SBE) accents, but also occasionally staged in settings as diverse as Samurai Japan and late twentieth century Australia. While there has been a great deal of research into the conventions of language, the nature of pronounced phonemes of language and the potential significations of words and phrases, there has been very little discussion – or even acknowledgement – of the contribution the actual vocal sound produced by the speaker makes to the performance of text. In Australia, any debate surrounding the sound of the text in performance has tended to be directed towards the accent, and the fact that an Australian accent has been traditionally held in contempt by members of the wider community.<sup>3</sup> In order to counter this, I propose a different way of listening, which highlights the voice itself, rather than the accent, as central to the way the performance is perceived.

In 1964 I took part in my first Shakespearean production, *The Winter's Tale*, directed by Ray Dunlop for Brisbane Arts Theatre. Everyone performed with their very best RP, with one exception. The actress playing Queen Hermione spoke with a broad Australian accent, a sound quite shocking to my ears<sup>4</sup> – and yet – within two or three rehearsals, her effortless command of the language and the verse structure, and her passionate, powerful portrayal completely won me over. This experience aroused my curiosity about the way we hear the voice, and how our cultural biases may affect our perceptions.

In Australia, as in other parts of the British Empire, a localised accent emerged very quickly after colonisation, but the Anglo Celtic power base exerted a strong influence, ensuring that the sound of upper class England was the preferred sound on stage, on the radio and in the justice courts. In particular, it has been accepted over the years by theatre audiences, and by many actors themselves, that Shakespeare should only be spoken in a British English (preferably SBE or RP) accent. This too has had the effect of 'silencing' or diminishing the perceived relevance of the voice by focussing attention on the accent.

In an effort to counteract this situation, to bring the voice of the actor centre stage, so to speak, and shine the spotlight on its uniquely essential role in providing the playwright's language, I have selected two productions from a significant period in Australian theatre history, one performed predominantly in RP and the other in General Australian and subjected them to the aural equivalent of a close reading. My purpose is to divert attention away from the accents, and to focus upon the vocal qualities and vocal behaviours exhibited by the actors, revealing the nature of their 'dramatic force' or performative function within those productions. The vocal performances are examined within the wider context of the overall productions, taking into account as much as possible the various influences that are either known, or substantiated by the sound of the actors' voices. These include vocal training practices, cultural and social influences of the time, traditions and perceived

requirements of the genre, and directorial interventions. The readings demonstrate that the voice is a production element worthy of close analysis and also that the presence or absence of a performative vocal behaviour or quality is not dependent upon the accent choice of the performer. To make this clear, I have chosen to contrast a production performed in RP with one performed mostly in General Australian. In both instances, the actors' accent work is impeccable. Before I introduce the productions under analysis, there are several matters about the voice – and recording the voice – that need exploration.

There are very few recordings of live performances of Shakespearean productions available before the advent of low cost video cameras during the late 1990s, and few examples of televised Australian productions. Among those that do exist are two productions for the State Theatre of South Australia that were restaged and recorded for television, *Macbeth* (1977) and *Twelfth Night* (1984), and Company B's *Hamlet* (1994), which was videoed for archival purposes.<sup>5</sup>

*Macbeth* was a restaged version of the stage production for television, so although it would have been recorded with broadcast quality equipment, there is inevitable degradation in the copying process, and the age of the video tape has probably caused further deterioration in both sound and picture quality. *Hamlet* was recorded during a live performance solely for the purpose of creating an archive recording, and it is unlikely that state of the art equipment was used. Despite one being recorded in a television studio and the other in a theatre, in both instances it is possible for the informed listener to discern performative differences between the voices and between vocal events, and to observe the range of vocal qualities and behaviours in evidence.

It is important to note the disadvantages of working with recordings of any kind, rather than a live performance. Firstly, as with any technical instrument, it is not possible to be sure that the recording is an accurate representation, that the sound quality of the voices has not been distorted in the course of electronic translation. The fact that the recordings can be listened to repeatedly is also in itself problematic: the recorded performance may be relatively identical each time it is played (allowing for possible degradation of the tape) but the researcher is not identical, being informed in some way by each previous viewing, while subject to new responses at each new viewing. Thus I acknowledge the colouration my individual contribution brings to the process; I may endeavour to comprehend things from past perspectives, but it can only ever be done from my own present and evolving cultural, social, political and psychological perspective.<sup>6</sup> As my experience is primarily that of a vocal practitioner (actor, director and vocal coach), my perspective is particularly charged with my practical understanding (and my belief system) of how the voice functions in performance.

The South Australian Theatre Company *Macbeth*,<sup>7</sup> directed by Colin George, has been chosen since it largely represents the 'old school' in terms of the vocal practices that influenced actor training during the first half of the twentieth century (as well as the tradition of performing with RP accents). By 1994, when Neil Armfield directed *Hamlet* for Company B Belvoir Street in Sydney,<sup>8</sup> Australian

audiences had become more accustomed to hearing Shakespeare in General (previously known as Cultivated, or Educated) and Broad Australian accents, although even in 2002, when John Bell published his memoir, *The Time of My Life*, there were still those who considered it just plain wrong.<sup>9</sup>

Voice is neither abstract nor immaterial, but it is ephemeral, temporal and conceptual: ephemeral in that it is heard and then is not heard; temporal in that it occurs only as it is manifested physically by the speaker. It lingers in the mind, just as a concept or an image does, yet we do not appear to have an appropriate vocabulary to describe it without drawing upon visual imagery. This is particularly apposite to the actor's voice, which comprises the playwright's language as well as the soundwaves generated by the actor. To remedy the lack of a specifically aural vocabulary, and to account for the fact that the voiced, or vocal performance text has a unique identity that is contingent upon the self of the actor as it is being enacted, I have appropriated the concept of performativity in the sense of 'dramatic performativity', described by W B Worthen as 'the relationship between the verbal text and the conventions [...] of behaviour that give it meaningful force as performed action'.<sup>10</sup> Three levels of performativity serve to identify the mode of vocal delivery while allowing for examination of 'the thingly character'<sup>11</sup> of the voiced text: linguistic performativity, para-performativity and meta-performativity.

Linguistic performativity accounts for the inherent sets of linguistic significations and speech acts as they exist on the page, as well as the paralinguistic elements of speech such as pitch, pace, tone, speech tune, volume and timbre that occur as the text is spoken aloud. For the most part, linguistic speech acts such as a promise<sup>12</sup>, a command or a confession exist in isolation only in theory. They have a habit of being rendered less efficacious or even contradicted as they are uttered aloud by what Austin refers to as 'infelicities'.<sup>13</sup> When this occurs, a secondary, or para-performative vocal quality (which could also be categorised as über- or over-performativity since it has the effect of adding to or layering the text with a function over and above its linguistic function) becomes apparent. While para-performativity may signify specific behaviours of the character who expresses the language in all its linguistic integrity, when rendered unintentionally or thoughtlessly it results in a shift in the quality of the voice, which occurs as a rift or distancing between the language and the speaker. For example, an utterance may occur as a citation (the actor 'quotes' the text), a recitation (the actor recites the text, telegraphing that it is poetic) or a demonstration (the voice seems to 'load[ing] the sound with meaning, and this overlays and dominates the words'<sup>14</sup>). The para-performative effect is also present when an actor performs in an accent not their own without the requisite skill. The accent seems superimposed, making the listener aware of the effort involved in shaping the sounds, however accurately they may be articulated.

The necessary skill of the actor is the ability to assimilate thought, voice, language and pronunciation, till they are, as far as discernible, 'as one'.<sup>15</sup> In everyday life people think, speak and act more or less organically; speaking is vocalised thought and a physical action. Brain cells, nervous system, chemical distribution, skeleton and musculature work together autonomously to allow thinking, speaking

and doing to occur spontaneously. Cicely Berry describes this process as being 'inside the language',<sup>16</sup> and when it is successfully accomplished, the vocal quality is that of meta-performativity. The actor who achieves this under the extremely abnormal circumstances of speaking a memorised, stylised text in front of an audience seems to be 'revealing' an emotional state, rather than "'talking about" it'.<sup>17</sup> An aural illusion, or *trompe l'oreille* is created, giving 'the experience of, not "hearing the real thing," but of "really hearing the thing"'.<sup>18</sup> Far from reducing the text to a 'naturalistic' or colloquial twentieth, or twenty-first century sound, it gives the impression that the heightened, stylised linguistic structure (whatever the accent) is the speaker's customary manner of speaking.<sup>19</sup>

### *Macbeth*

*Macbeth*, directed by Colin George for the South Australian Theatre Company, opened on 28th October 1977 and ran for three weeks. It was then re-staged as a heavily cut, or 'compressed' version,<sup>20</sup> in the studios of SAS Channel 10 in front of cameras for a three part television series. The production draws upon contemporary interest in Asian influences<sup>21</sup> for its visual theme, at a time when Australia was beginning to turn to its near neighbours for both trade and cultural exchange. The world of the play is derived from a combination of Elizabethan England and Japanese Samurai culture, 'martial, strong and intimidating', designed by Hugh Coleman.<sup>22</sup> It is a visually unique and coherent vision of a society with strict observance of the rules of social status, in which the overall formal structure of the verse sits comfortably. The production aesthetic bridges two of the major influences on Shakespeare performance in Australia in the twentieth century, the insistence on textual clarity inherited from the English tradition, and the physical theatre movement that emerged in the 1960s.

The cast of *Macbeth* adheres predominantly to the tradition of performing Shakespeare with RP accents.<sup>23</sup> They do so with great skill and ease, and the result is that there is no difficulty in accepting that each of them belongs to the same English language/accent community. As far as can be ascertained the production was well received at the time, described by the theatre critic for *The Advertiser* as 'the finest he had even seen', with Daphne Grey's performance as Lady Macbeth hailed as 'absolutely supreme'.<sup>24</sup>

The vocal behaviour most of the actors hold in common is the method of acquiring volume and intensity in the vocal sound by maximising nasal and head resonance. This approach was favoured by the voice and speech teachers of the first half of the twentieth century<sup>25</sup> whose influence lingers to some extent in some areas of the speech training community to this day. It often involved 'rib reserve', a breath-training regime focused around the chest area from the diaphragm to the collarbones, which requires the performer to sustain an expanded rib cage as the diaphragm ascends during expiration; speakers 'project' their sound to the back of the room with a raised soft palate (velum), aiming for maximum nasal resonance (assumed at the time to be generated within the nasal and sinus cavities that reside within the 'mask' of the face, and the dome of the skull). As a means of creating a powerful sound

which carries, unaided by external technology, to the farthest corners of a five thousand seat theatre, it is extremely effective, hence its popularity with actors and orators who performed in the such venues throughout the nineteenth century. The higher frequency of the fundamental tone ('f0') combines with fewer and more sympathetic harmonics in the resonant range<sup>26</sup> resulting in a sound with excellent carrying quality. The theatre space for which this production of *Macbeth* was originally staged, The Playhouse at the Adelaide Festival Centre, seats 620 people on two levels, and would still require voices trained to be audible without microphones throughout the auditorium.

Even when used skilfully, this form of vocal practice often results in the restriction of the pitch and resonance range to the middle and upper areas, and when 'maintained at high-intensity levels [...] it can be annoying, painful, or even frightening to a listener'.<sup>27</sup> It carries a hard, edgy quality which does not sound 'natural', hence could be what Patrice Pavis refers to when he notes that 'The actor's voice is necessarily forced, even deformed by the necessity of talking in a loud voice and remaining audible'.<sup>28</sup> Berry refers to over-emphasis of this vocal quality as 'curiously disembodied and a little contrived [...] [having] a metallic quality and lack[ing] dimension'.<sup>29</sup> The use of the technique, in itself, has no impact on whether or not the voice resonates with meta-performativity.

Three of the actors (Michael Siberry, Daphne Grey and Colin Friels) appear to use a more equitable balance of fully embodied resonance, creating the *trompe l'oreille* effect of normal speaking voices which nevertheless have the capacity to be heard in a large auditorium. One could speculate that this was the result of the shift to a more fully embodied, physical approach to vocal training for actors which began to be observed in Australia in the 1970s,<sup>30</sup> although there had been a radical change in the UK from the mid-1950s,<sup>31</sup> partly in response to the new wave of theatre writing requiring a more intimate effect, exemplified by John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*.<sup>32</sup>

Both Siberry and Friels were recent graduates of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in 1977, but English-born Grey who uses the same full-bodied method, trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD)<sup>33</sup> in London in the early sixties, possibly under Berry. In any case, while both vocal approaches ensure adequate volume of sound and carrying power, like any technique they do not, of themselves, determine the performative force or nature of the delivery, nor do they guarantee engaging or effective performances.

Australian-born Brian James, who trained at CSSD in London in the early 1950s,<sup>34</sup> uses projection expertly in that it is unobtrusive. James's Duncan retains both physical and kingly power either relaxing in his chair or striding in and out of it. He almost grunts his approval of Macbeth: 'Great happiness!' (1.2.58)<sup>35</sup> his voice husky yet clear enough to provide the language intact; then it becomes solid, giving weight to the immensity of the victory: 'Go pronounce his present death/ And with his former title greet Macbeth' (1.2.64-65). He achieves the dual performative functions of delivering the linguistic speech act of a formal instruction, while meta-performatively establishing his credentials as a fully rounded individual, the character of Duncan.

It could be said that James has managed to transcend his own self in order to realise the self of Duncan, yet there is no doubt that the only Duncan on stage is the one who is actually Brian James. In this sense, he is both himself, and Duncan. The three actors playing the three witches, however, never quite achieve this realisation of selves: they always seem to be play-acting, or pretending to be something they are not, without actually establishing characters or selves who are doing the play-acting, apart from the actors. George's directorial concept for this production involves the witches disguising themselves as employees of the Macbeth household, who influence and manipulate Macbeth's downfall. Without advance warning, on first viewing I found their behaviour confusing and lacking credibility within the context of the world of the play. Even with this knowledge, on second and third viewing/listening, I hear actors manipulating their voices, performing para-performative actions of quoting, or reciting the text, and only rarely, if at all, allowing the meta-performative quality of a freely expressed self to be heard. Even for skilled actors such as these, it is challenging to communicate such complex layering of intentions and sub-textual behaviours vocally.

For instance, when Siberry appears in the guise of the messenger reporting the movement of Birnam wood towards Dunsinane he responds to Macbeth's: 'Liar and slave!' (5.5.34) with the crouched and hunched posture, raised pitch and vocal tremor that are used when people pretend, para-performatively, to be afraid: 'Let me endure your wrath if't be not so. / Within this three mile may you see it coming / I say, a moving grove' (5.5.35-37). This could be a case of directorial concept dictating a deliberate dislocation between visual, vocal and linguistic sense to enhance the idea of the witches 'playing' members of the household in order to manipulate Macbeth. The problem is that when the pretence is so obvious, I am left wondering why Macbeth does not recognise it as such, and the disturbance in the credibility of the action, from my perspective, distracts from the ensuing few lines of dialogue. In this instance, I assume that the actor, rather than the character, is para-performatively pretending, for the character would surely pretend more skilfully, in which case I would be free to draw my own conclusion as to whether he was speaking truthfully or not, within the context of the play.

Kevin Mills's highly focused projected sound has an overall brighter quality than Siberry's. His text has been scored in the musical sense, the words semi-sung ('Sprechgesang'),<sup>36</sup> an effect that may have been designed to heighten the sense of strangeness surrounding the witches. As the Bloody Captain reporting on Macbeth's exploits to King Duncan, Mills's text is articulated clearly, but the jolting, intrusive rhythm of pointedly iambic feet ('dee-DUM dee-DUM') along with the repetitive intonation results in the foregrounding of the technique of his delivery at the expense of the content. I am reminded constantly that this is SHAKESPEARE and blank verse, and that the actor is speaking non-naturalistically:<sup>37</sup>

Doubtful it stood,  
As two spent swimmers that do cling together

And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald  
 ... from the Western Isles<sup>38</sup>  
 Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;  
 And Fortune, on his damnéd quarrel smiling,  
 Showed like a rebel's whore. (1.2.8-15)

This is considered to be a difficult speech, consisting largely of the kind of 'old-style rant'<sup>39</sup> and many actors are tempted to deal with by rattling through it as quickly as possible. Mills physicalises his understanding of what he is saying, but does not share that understanding vocally, his voice and body seeming disconnected. The para-performative act of converting the verse from a form of self-expression to a form of vocal pyrotechnics has, for me, the effect of creating a barrier between the character and the listener, so that while words are heard and understood on one level, the information contained within the language fails to be delivered. Meta-performativity requires first and foremost that the linguistic functionality of the text be rendered intact, within the context of the specific production. James Murdoch, commenting as long ago as 1880 upon the tendency of actors to employ a particular 'mode of speech' for different characters, observed that it 'ignored the fact that every passion of the human soul has its own vocal range'.<sup>40</sup> This tendency is still apparent in the twenty-first century, being part of the personal armoury of many actors; it amounts to an unconscious defense mechanism that serves to provide a false sense of security while denying the audience access to the full humanity of the the actor who stands in for (who is, in that moment) the character.

In her first scene Daphne Grey (Lady Macbeth) responds to Macbeth's letter with a voice that is rich, open and vulnerable – her defences are down – and meta-performative. She reads the letter with subdued exhilaration, a touch of breathiness in the sound. Calling upon the realms of darkness to aid her, her excitement seems contained only by the need for secrecy; the light, breathy yet warm quality of her voice gives her an air of youthful naivety. She appears to have no sense of the enormity of the powers she calls upon:

Come, thick night,  
 And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
 Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark  
 To cry "Hold, hold!" (1.5.50-54)

This passage is spoken with such imploring, more like a child preparing to play a game of 'murder in the dark' than a grown woman consciously invoking evil into her life. There is surprise and delight in her even lighter, semi-whispered tones



on 'That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold!' (2.2.1). Her exchange with the 'servants/witches' calls for more authority and her voice drops in pitch and loses the breathiness accordingly. In Grey's interpretation, Lady Macbeth's strength of purpose seems to lie in her lack of comprehension of the extent of the dire consequences of her actions throughout the murder, and this carries through the following scene, when the only time her pitch drops and the text is fully vocalised (realised) is on the line: 'Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done't' (2.2.12-13).

From the moment she enters the court in Act 3, as hostess to the banquet Macbeth has organised to consolidate his power, time and experience have had an appreciable effect upon her. The voice is rounder, more mature, yet less certain. 'Naught's had, all's spent / Where our desire is got without content' (3.2.4-5) rings with self-knowledge; emotional complexity is recognisable within the wider resonance range and the flow of the vowels. When she suddenly drops, open-throated into the deeper resonant notes of 'Things without all remedy / Should be without regard. What's done is done' (3.2.11-12), the speaker's depths seem to be infinite, she is at risk of falling into them, and the listener's thrill is not unconnected with the subliminal feeling that the actor is prepared to risk everything for the audience's sake.<sup>41</sup> Feeling, in this context, is an emotional response physically manifested in the body because of a particular auditory experience. Any competent actor can demonstrate that this effect does not result solely from the use of a particular pitch or resonance range or inflection, which can be mimicked or manipulated. Instead, it seems to result from the apparent, perceived spontaneity of the vocal event, whereby the language of the text has 'revealed itself'.<sup>42</sup>

In the sleep-walking scene Lady Macbeth speaks clearly, desperately, as if only now understanding fully the dreadful implications of her former ambitions and deeds. 'Hell is murky' (5.1.36) is a statement of fact. 'The Thane of Fife had a wife' is likewise a statement of something past and gone, but '[w]here is she now?' (42) is a clear request for information. She has undergone a devastating experiential and emotional journey, and any mental instability is understandable. Walter Benjamin's discussion of the task of the translator of a literary work, where language is 'in a constant state of flux', seems relevant here.<sup>43</sup> Since the language of Shakespeare is highly structured and, to some extent, archaic, it is Grey's 'translation which catches fire on the eternal life of the works and the perpetual renewal of language'; Grey's voice provides a meta-performative translation of the text.<sup>44</sup>

Leslie Dayman (Banquo) highlights the verse nature of his text, not by emphasising the iambic rhythm, but by giving unstressed words the pronunciation usually reserved for use only when they are stressed. For example, in everyday conversation, 'shall' is usually pronounced [ʃəl] (with the unstressed vowel, or schwa between the 'sh' and the 'l') unless the word is deliberately stressed, or emphasised, in which case it is pronounced with the /æ/ as in 'hat' vowel.

MACBETH. Your children shall be kings.

[ jɔ: 'ʃɪldrən ʃəl bi kɪŋz ]

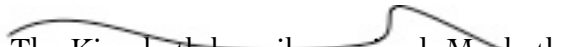
BANQUO.

You shall be king

[ ju: ʃəl bi kɪŋ ] (1.3.86)

Edwin Hodgeman (*Macbeth*) uses /ʃəl/, and while Dayman gives the word no more weight than Hodgeman, by pronouncing the 'a' as [æ], as if the word were in a stressed position, it reaches the ear with an artificial, constructed quality that is dangerously close to the dreaded Shakespeare Voice. This is assuaged, however, by the otherwise meta-performative quality of his voice, demonstrating that the pronunciation of individual words need not impact upon the vocal quality, nor does it determine the performative function in operation. If anything, it serves to exhibit how Banquo can subtly utilise a para-performative vocal behaviour of formal deference in his interaction with his superior, Macbeth.

Craig Ashley (Ross), on the other hand, is physically mobile, but vocally static; his announcement of Macbeth's promotion to Thane of Cawdor is almost monotonous, constrained within the pitch range most sympathetic within the vocal mode of projection. The inflection of each line falls within patterns similar in tune, although varying in length; they sound habitual, calling attention to the tune itself, and hence distracting from the content:



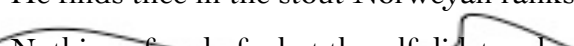
The King hath happily received, Macbeth,

The news of thy success; and when he reads

Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,

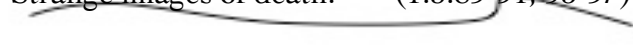
[...]

He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks



Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make

Strange images of death. (1.3.89-91, 95-97)



The repetitive intonation pattern and narrow vocal range combine to conceal, to my ears, the character of Ross beneath the para-performative declamation. It is not easy to transform such formal, highly structured language. It takes skill and a particular kind of generosity of spirit to convert such a text from black marks on a white page into sound waves resonating with the complexity of a human experience that may only be imagined. This is even more evident in Patrick Frost's *Malcolm*, who delivers his final speech in a 'sing-song' style, with equal stress on every second syllable:

We SHALL not SPEND a LARGE exPENSE of TIME [PAUSE]  
 BeFORE we RECKon WITH your SEveral LOVES  
 AND MAKE us EV'n with YOU. (5.9.26-28)

Like Mills and Ashley, he gives the language a clipped quality, and the rhythm of the verse is obtrusive – the 'dee-DUM-dee-DUM' pattern of iambic pentameter is overpowering – the Shakespeare Voice has para-performatively overwhelmed any other intention. Since the text is a formal declaration or political statement, it is interesting to compare it with Hodgeman's in the banqueting scene, as Macbeth greets his guests: 'You know your own degrees – sit down: / At first and last the hearty welcome' (3.4.1-2). Hodgeman's tone of edgy resonance speaks, in this instance, of Macbeth 'performing'. While the vocal technique overall has not 'disappeared' or been subsumed to the extent that Grey's has, as with most of Hodgeman's performance, the calculated part of the process stays sufficiently in the background to allow Macbeth's voice to come to the fore. Frost, however, seems to me to foreground himself, the actor, on stage, para-performatively demonstrating his character's newly acquired kingly status, remembering the words and applying the verse structure to them, instead of allowing the verse structure to inform the presentation. It is interesting to note, when the verse is pointed to this extent, the fact that not all the actors treat it this way. This is not to say that they ignore, or destroy the rhythm of the verse. On the contrary, as Dayman, Grey, James, Hodgeman and Colin Friels (Macduff) demonstrate in this production, the verse can be spoken with sensitivity to its structure without tipping the balance in favour of rhythm over the dramatic expression of the language. The rhythm resides within the shape of the language itself, without the actor needing to overtly produce it as well.

Throughout the play, Macbeth's progress from ambitious, loving husband to tyrannical and insensitive warlord can be charted vocally from the more open but guarded quality of the early scenes to the edgy, sharply constrained voice with which he responds to Macduff's challenge in the final scene: 'But get thee back! My soul is too much charged / With blood of thine already' (5.8.5-6). His overweening confidence at this point is evident in an almost conversational note in his voice: it is relaxed, broadly resonant. Colin Friels' Macduff is young and unguardedly passionate, his voice open in every direction, slightly out of control and rasping as he attempts to rein in his emotions: 'I have no words; / My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain / Than terms can give thee out!' (6-8). Macbeth's response is to return to the constricted upper tones that have more and more predominated in his public pronouncements as the play progresses, the slight nasality here imparting an air of pomposity. Even within this narrower pitch range, however, the sound is full of complex harmonics, making him credible as a man convinced of his impregnable status: 'I bear a charmed life, which must not yield / To one of woman born' (12-13).

Friels is totally engaged in the act of articulating Macduff's spontaneous thoughts via the language. Anger and despair can be heard in his voice as the meta-performative act of revelation, complementing and enhancing the text for the listener.

'Despair thy charm' (5.6.13) seems to emerge from his heart, rather than his mouth, a clear, precise, informed injunction delivered surely from the centre of his considerable rage: 'And let the angel whom thou still hast served / Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped' (14-16). His voice allows no second-guessing, conveys no sub-text other than the conviction of a man who knows his words are as dangerous to his opponent as any sword. Friels, like Grey, has a quality residing within his voice that is beyond pitch, or pace, or rhythm or resonance. It is the quality wherein his humanity is audible: it makes him uniquely the individual who expresses himself. It is also the quality that leads to the illusion, and hence the myth, that acting is easy.

In this production of *Macbeth*, although the RP accents and the attention to the rhythm and structure of the verse are fairly consistent and conspicuous throughout, these elements neither determine the occurrence of a meta-performative vocal performance, nor do they preclude it. Given the range of training backgrounds and levels of experience among the cast of this production, it is fairly inevitable that there should be a wide range of both behaviours and qualities within the overall vocal performance text. Even though this production of *Macbeth* is largely representative of a style of presentation now considered in some circles to be old-fashioned with its English rather than Australian sound, and the hints of nineteenth century declarative style, it is fascinating to observe how it exemplifies a particular turning point in the performance of Shakespeare in Australia. In the second case study, *Hamlet*, a very different vocal aesthetic is in evidence.

### *Hamlet*

Company B's 1994 production of *Hamlet*, directed by Neil Armfield, was presented in the Belvoir Street Theatre Upstairs, Sydney. The cast includes actors born and trained in Poland and England, as well as those born in Australia from a range of cultural backgrounds including indigenous Australian, and the accents they use are predominately a form of General Australian, coloured with some markers of the actors' ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The framing of the production is that of a possible Australia lying somewhere between Elizabethan England and Ceausescu's 1980s Romania. The actors wear modern clothing with a classic touch and their physical modality is – like their confidently Australian vocal delivery – integrated within the overall performance with a deceptive air of naturalism. Frank Gauntlett's review in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* was typical of the unstinting praise the production received: 'It is, as many had anticipated and hoped, a landmark production; a masterful realisation of a masterpiece and about as close as prejudice will allow to a clear and terrible voice crying in the wilderness of our time. It is fiercely demanding, spare and daring production [*sic*]'.<sup>45</sup>

An unnamed *Sunday Telegraph* critic noted that '[t]his is *Hamlet* as it should be. The speeches are spoken (in the main) trippingly, there are no special effects, no theatrical tricks and nothing to make it easy for audiences who have trouble following television commercials'.<sup>46</sup> If 'theatrical tricks' include the vocal means by which actors create the *illusion* that they are behaving 'normally', rather than acting, then this

production relies on one in particular, that of the meta-performative voice. The *trompe l'oreille* – for the sensibilities of a late twentieth century audience – is complete. Gauntlett calls it 'a truly remarkable *Hamlet*: pellucid in narrative, unyielding of integrity, unwavering of vision and driven by a cruel and inexorable energy'.

There will never be complete agreement in any given audience as to how well a production has succeeded in its aims. For example, where Gauntlett was 'blind to the source' of David Wenham's interpretation of Laertes, I found it charming, irritating and deeply moving in unexpected, entirely satisfying ways. I also responded differently to certain aspects of the vocal performances of Max Cullen. Cullen is a highly regarded Australian actor and visual artist who studied acting under Hayes Gordon at The Ensemble Theatre.<sup>47</sup>

As the Priest who conducts Ophelia's interment, Cullen speaks directly, with the authority and compassion of his office complicated by the distaste his words express for those who choose to take their own lives. As Polonius, however, he constructs an 'old man' voice and imposes this quality on the text as a vehicle to represent age and faltering wits. He manipulates the phrasing to demonstrate these qualities, and it seems to me to be the manipulation that creates the 'clap trap' effect (making the audience laugh) rather than the text or the character. His Priest seems a hard-hearted, dogmatic human, but one who has a full expressive range at his disposal whether he uses it or not. Polonius's range is limited, with little if any access into the lower pitch range. This is a reasonable artistic choice, since the male voice commonly loses its lower range as it ages,<sup>48</sup> deteriorating into the 'childish treble' referred to by Jaques in *As You Like It* (2.7.162). Diminution of range, which results from the slackening of micro-muscles within the vocal tract, subsequent loss of muscle tone and increased effects of gravity over time is perceived as ageing. When it is produced by the body, especially the shoulders, being held in a relatively cramped and tense position (in an attempt to mimic the decrepitude of age) and conscious restriction of the action of the larynx, it is identifiable as a held, or manipulated voice sounding with the para-performative quality of pretence.

By contrast, Ralph Cotterill achieves three markedly different yet equally meta-performative characterisations in his three roles as the Ghost of Hamlet's Father, the Player King and the Ambassador to Norway. Cotterill is an English-born actor, a former member of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and the only actor in Armfield's ensemble to use a form of English RP. However, while Cotterill's vowels are the open, rounded phonemes of the one-time 'official' sound of Shakespeare, his speech patterns and rhythms are more Australian than English, and the speech tune contains fewer peaks and troughs than that of RP.<sup>49</sup> Cotterill's Ghost speaks in heavy, deeply retelling tones of pain, sorrow and contained rage, the darkness of his plight flows into Hamlet's (and my) understanding. It has Cotterill's full range at its disposal, but the higher notes are full of dark resonance. This is a 'formal' voice, having much of form and content to communicate.

As Voltemand, Cotterill abandons the darkly heavy, almost but never quite ponderous vocal quality and gains a more brisk attack in the voice that is appropriate to the nature of diplomacy. Voltemand may only speak twenty-two lines of text, but

they are spoken with the full weight of Cotterill's physical presence and humanity. Nothing that is appropriate is withheld, in other words, the language serves to reveal Cotterill's specific interpretation within the meta-performative vocal quality.

When Cotterill's Player King speaks (at Hamlet's request) the monologue resounding the death of Priam, once again he uses his full range, but this time with a less dark, less heavy, less 'under-the-earthly' quality. There is more than a hint of the RSC's style in the Player King's performance, possibly suggested by the accent. It is clearly a 'performance', because he places himself totally within the text, which is a story, and the performance becomes an act of storytelling, rather than 'straight' acting. The para-performative action of storytelling is revealed, even as his commitment to the story resonates by means of a meta-performative vocal quality. In other words, while Cotterill performs the Player King, it is the Player King who tells the story. Hamlet's – and Polonius's – astonishment that the Player King is able to turn pale and weep in the turn of a moment's text is also indicative of how ready we are to acknowledge the evidence of our eyes, without appreciating that what we hear has contributed to the impact of the event upon us.

George Washingmachine and Keith Robinson, as Guildenstern and Rosencrantz respectively, are reminiscent of Thompson and Thomson from Hergé's *The Adventures of Tintin*, dressed alike in dark suits, their behaviour slightly clownish, constantly aspiring to please and just as constantly finding themselves wrong-footed. While not speaking in unison as Thompson and Thomson were wont to do, nevertheless Washingmachine and Robinson give the impression of being vocally interchangeable, their light, crisp voices suggesting Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's superficial comprehension of court politics, and the shallowness of their natures. Just as Cotterill's ghost has access to his full vocal range, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern possess fully ranged and resonated meta-performative voices, but always with lighter tones in evidence.

Kevin Smith began his acting career in the 1970s with the National Aboriginal Black Theatre<sup>50</sup>. His voice is distinctive in this production for his indigenous accent. This element of his voice is merely observable, never intrusive, and it sits as easily within the patterns of speech provided by Shakespeare for the soldier Barnardo in the opening scenes as it does for the other roles he plays: Reynaldo, the gravedigger, the Captain and the Player. The quality of his voice reveals the text, translating it into a uniquely lived, meta-performatively spoken form, and the illusion of each present character is complete.

Jacek Koman's Claudius and Gillian Jones's Gertrude are welcomed in the opening scenes of this production into a strictly formal and public arena by means of semi-martial music and the applause of the bystanders. Koman's soft Polish accent flavours the voice and allows the rhythm to underscore the formality of the text, so that it does not impinge upon my ear as anything other than the formal speech of an astute politician – 'pared of all nonsense, frippery and tricky actor stuff',<sup>51</sup> meta-performatively delivered:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
 To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him  
 Together with remembrance of ourselves. (1.2.1-7)

He speaks confidently and unsentimentally, and the incongruity of this tone allied to the linguistic performativity of the words he speaks is what causes me, as the listener, to mistrust him, rather than any hint of villainy being demonstrated in his delivery. In this situation, the meta-performative act of meaning exactly what he is saying, within the given context, results in the theatrical illusion of a man who can tell lies well enough to deceive his supporters.

Richard Roxburgh graduated from NIDA 1986 and his 'incandescent' Hamlet likewise epitomises a voice that offers a newly minted translation of the text.<sup>52</sup> Roxburgh's voice is easily and comfortably audible in all instances, whether soft or loud, in intimate moments or in violent explosions of stormy outrage. When he seems to shout, there is no tension in the voice, only in the atmosphere, so that at no stage do I hear a forced voice: I heard the need, and the *trompe l'oreille* of an angry shout. This is an assured performance, with specific choices obviously having been made in the rehearsal room, but even after several viewings, to me it looks and sounds fresh, alive and unpredictable. Unpredictability is a necessary, if not sufficient marker that signals a voice replete with meta-performativity. As Hamlet 'reels at the horror, fascination and disgust of his predicament' through 'all his folly' it is his 'wonder at the world, the strength and vivacity of youth that ricochets Hamlet through the Elsinore necropolis to the harrowing inevitability at his end'.<sup>53</sup> This is a fine example of the skill and artistry of the performer at work, demonstrating Heidegger's proposition that: 'In the art work, the truth of what is has set itself to work. Art is truth setting itself to work'.<sup>54</sup>

Roxburgh accesses an extremely wide vocal range throughout the performance, with depth of resonance in the upper pitch range, and enough bright colours in the lower pitch range to carry the sound. In the early scenes, his voice sits relatively lightly in the middle to upper range without being noticeably high, adding to the impression of an intelligent, articulate but politically inexperienced young man. As the play progresses, the voice gradually deepens in response to the charged and conflicting events confronting him. On his return from England it has settled into a more mature, weightier sound, in keeping with the more grounded physicality he has acquired. In other words, the character's progression from immature young man to a wiser, more insightful self is reflected in the resonant quality and weight of the voice, complementing and reinforcing the visual, physical signs of such a process.

Roxburgh's accent is General Australian, and the way he shapes the language appears to be completely in concert with the way Shakespeare wrote it. In other words, there is no sense of strangeness to be observed in the style of enunciation or the use of the language. Shakespeare's text is transformed from its literary form on the page to a language culture where iambic pentameter slides unobtrusively into heightened prose and back again. The rhythm serves the meaning, or intentions, rather than the other way round. Each word emerges within each phrase with the clarity determined by a speaker who owns his word choices; each word is not only understandable in its own right, but also intelligible as part of a more complex statement. The clarity provided by clear diction is so integrated with the style of language use and physical qualities that clarity would seem to arise from the style itself. In other words, it does not draw attention to itself, it exists only to reveal why the language is being expressed, uniquely, upon this occasion.

As Horatio, Geoffrey Rush provides the calm ('subtle, digified [*sic*] beautiful and humane'<sup>55</sup>) contrast to Roxburgh's more tempestuous Hamlet. Armfield's placing of Horatio as an observer in scenes for which Shakespeare did not specify his presence never detracts from or contradicts what is present in the text – the support of an intelligent, more mature friend and confidante for Hamlet. Gillian Jones (Gertrude), Jacqueline McKenzie (Ophelia) and David Wenham (Laertes) similarly provide performances that are, for me, consistently meta-performative throughout. Armfield's vision of a mis-governed state and the terrible consequences for the individuals drawn into the downfall of a tyrannical ruler is made deeply personal and relevant by the fine performances and ensemble style of the production.

While every production element can be demonstrated to contribute to the transmission of meaning, it is apparent that there is in the sound of the human voice 'a unity which calls for intuition to grasp it'.<sup>56</sup> There is still, in 2014, evidence of a reluctance by some audiences to accept the local, Australian sound, and for some actors to unconsciously default to an attempted RP for Shakespeare.<sup>57</sup> By contrasting the vocal aesthetics of these two productions and analysing the vocal behaviours in terms of their performative function, it can be appreciated that neither the accent nor the performance style necessarily determines the efficacy of the performance.

Earlier this year, I played Juliet's nurse and Lady Montague in *Romeo + Juliet*, directed by Timothy Wynn for THAT Production Company in Ipswich. The cast included high school students and more mature amateur and professional actors with varying degrees of experience. The younger actors and I spoke in our natural General Australian accents (which are not identical, but close enough to sit under that general umbrella category), while some of the more mature actors elected to perform in an approximation of RP. A close reading of the vocal performances in this production would reveal the skill level of the actors concerned. For example, the young actor playing Juliet (her first Shakespeare performance) spoke clearly, if rapidly, para-performatively reciting the lines throughout, occasionally raising her voice angrily, but failing to share any insights into Juliet's situation beyond the sound of the spoken words. Romeo, on the other hand, performed by a more experienced acting school graduate, used the language, meta-performatively, as a means of self-



expression, revealing a passionate 'loose-cannon' of a young man. I do not mean to imply that only an acting qualification will result in an effective performance, but rather to point out that there are skills required to bring Shakespeare's language to life, and the degree of those skills will be evident in the vocal quality of the performer.

My work with the voice over a period of fifty years has led me to the conclusion that while clarity of articulation is always essential, it is the voice, rather than the accent, that is the crucial element in transmitting what the actor sees as lying *within* the language of a text, and that since the actor's function is to communicate what lies within the language (as against merely repeating the words and phrases), there must be a scholarly way to address the performing voice with as much rigour and close attention as has historically been given to the language, the visual production elements or the directorial interpretations. When this is achieved, the question of which accent is used has significance as a creative choice rather than historical convention,<sup>58</sup> and the voices of skilled Australian actors can be acknowledged as the primary contributing factor, presenting Shakespeare's texts in such a way as to transform the language of sixteenth century England to resound in our Australian ears with relevance and discernment.

---

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Hyperion: a romance*, Book III, Chapter III, 'Interlachen', The Literature Network: [http://www.online-literature.com/henry\\_longfellow/hyperion/21/](http://www.online-literature.com/henry_longfellow/hyperion/21/), accessed 29 November 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Flloyd Kennedy, 'Shakespeare's Voice: A Theory of the Voice in Performance' (PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon is attributed to the so-called Cultural Cringe, discussed in depth by Arthur Phillips in 1950, and, in relation to voice, by Rob Pensalfini in 2009, whereby it is assumed that nothing created in Australia could be as good quality as it would be if created elsewhere. Arthur Phillips, 'The Cultural Cringe', *Meanjin*, 9.4 (1950), pp. 299-302; Rob Pensalfini, 'Not in Our Own Voices: Accent and Identity in Contemporary Australian Shakespeare Performance', *Australasian Drama Studies*, 54 (2009), pp. 142-58.

<sup>4</sup> My training followed the Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB) curriculum through to Associate Diploma level. The syllabus was similar to that of the 'Speaking Verse and Prose' programme of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA), except that the AMEB syllabus taught three Australian accents: Uneducated, Broad and Educated, and British Received Pronunciation, the latter being the only acceptable accent for Shakespeare. Nowadays the category of

Uneducated has disappeared, leaving Broad and Educated which is now referred to in linguistic circles as General Australian.

<sup>5</sup> The Bell Shakespeare Company, founded in 1990, is considered by many to be Australia's premier producer of Shakespeare's work, but the Bell archive only began in the mid 1990s.

<sup>6</sup> R.W.Vince, 'Theatre History as an Academic Discipline' in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past*, Postlewait, Thomas and Bruce A McConachie (eds.), (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1989), pp. 1-19. p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> The videorecording of the televised production is held at the National Film & Sound Archive.

<sup>8</sup> The archive videorecording of this production is held at the Company B office, Belvoir Street Theatre.

<sup>9</sup> John Bell, *The Time of My Life* (Sydney: Currency, 2002), p. 190.

<sup>10</sup> W.B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003), p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', translated by Albert Hofstadter, in J.Glenn Gray, (ed.) *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper, 1971), pp. 17-86, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> For example, to say out loud the words 'I promise' both communicates the fact, and enacts the function of promising.

<sup>13</sup> J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Cicely Berry, *The Actor and the Text* (London: Virgin, 1993), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Patsy Rodenburg, *The Need for Words: Voice and the Text* (London: Methuen Drama, 1993), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Nancy Saklad, *Voice and Speech Training in the New Millennium: Conversations with Master Teachers* (Milwaukee, WI: Applause, 2011), p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1992), p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> K. Norman, 'Stepping Outside for a Moment: Narrative Space in Two Works for Sound Alone' in S.Emmerson (ed.), *Music, Electronic Media and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 217-44, p. 220.

<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, when Shakespeare's text is presented in a fake-sounding English accent, with intrusive attention given to the rhythm and structure of the verse, the result is the so-called 'Shakespeare Voice' that is still the bane of school-children.

<sup>20</sup> Colin George, (Director), *The South Australian Theatre Company's production of Macbeth by William Shakespeare*, produced for the Department of Education by the South Australian Film Corporation, (Adelaide 1977): [http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/22867534,q&versionId=27733833](http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/22867534?q&versionId=27733833), accessed 17 December 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Roger Pulvers, 'Presenter Interview: An Organization Turning out World-Class Actors: Talking with the Director of the National Institute of Dramatic Art of Australia', *Performing Arts Network Japan*, 10 (2006) [http://www.performingarts.jp/E/pre\\_interview/0506/1.html](http://www.performingarts.jp/E/pre_interview/0506/1.html), accessed 30 November 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Colin George, 'Introduction to Part 1', *Macbeth*.

- 
- <sup>23</sup> John Rickard, 'Shakespeare' in Philip Parson (ed.) *A Companion to Theatre in Australia*, Parsons (Sydney: Currency Press, 1995), pp. 522-25, p. 524.
- <sup>24</sup> Peter Ward, *A Singular Act: Twenty-Five Years of the State Theatre Company of South Australia* (Adelaide: Wakefield, 1992).
- <sup>25</sup> Rose Bruford, *Speech and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1948); Elsie Fogerty, *Speech Craft: A Manual of Practice in English Speech* (London: Dent, 1930); Gwynneth Thurburn, *Voice and Speech: An Introduction* (Welwyn, Herts.: Nisbett, 1939).
- <sup>26</sup> Ingo R. Titze, *Principles of Voice Production* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice, 1994). pp. 246-48, 332.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p. 246.
- <sup>28</sup> Patrice Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film*, translated by David Williams (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 139.
- <sup>29</sup> Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor*, (London: Harrap, 1973), p. 41.
- <sup>30</sup> Judith Phippen and Dianne Eden, *Resonating Bodies: Reflections on 50 Years of Theory and Practice in Voice and Movement Training for Actors and the Framing of a Manifesto for Today*, (Brisbane: QUT Publications and Printing, 1997). p.17; Ric Knowles, 'Alternative Pedagogies, Cultural Studies, and the Teaching of Drama and Theatre', *Theatre Research in Canada-Recherches Théâtrales Au Canada*, 19.2 (1998), pp. 158-76. The writings of Constantin Stanislavsky were also beginning to exert influence on actor training in the UK and Australia, with the latter taking more from his focus upon physical actions, while in the US the attention was directed to Lee Strasburg's version, the so-called 'method acting'.
- <sup>31</sup> Cicely Berry, *Text in Action* (London: Virgin, 2001), p. 31.
- <sup>32</sup> Kate Parker, 'Goodbye, Voice Beautiful', *Plays and Players*, July (1985), pp. 32-33. The transfer to England of Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* also contributed to this shift in attitudes.
- <sup>33</sup> This institution is now known as the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.
- <sup>34</sup> Gerald Mayhead, 'Familiar Face on Stage, Screen', Obituary, *The Age* 12 November 2009, sec. National.
- <sup>35</sup> All Shakespeare references are from Herschel Baker, Anne Barton, Frank Kermode, Harry Levin, Hallett Smith, Marie Edel (eds) *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton, 1997), second edition.
- <sup>36</sup> Pavis, *Analyzing Performance*, p. 140.
- <sup>37</sup> In his article, 'Not in Our Own Voices: Accent and Identity in Contemporary Australian Shakespeare Performance', *Australasian Drama Studies* 54 (April 2009), Rob Pensalfini discusses the apparent 'default' position of many Australian actors which is to adopt a pseudo Standard British English accent (RP) when performing Shakespeare. In my experience, this is often accompanied by an exaggerated rhythmic intonation that is assumed to be how Shakespeare 'should' be spoken.
- <sup>38</sup> I have used ellipsis to indicate cuts in the text that were made in this production.
- <sup>39</sup> Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (New York: Farrar, 2000) p. 204.
- <sup>40</sup> Quoted in Lucille S. Rubin, 'Voices of the Past: David Garrick, John Phillip Kemble, Edmund Kean 1741 – 1833' (PhD thesis, New York University, 1973) p. 96. This tendency is still apparent, as it is part of the actor's personal armory, a defense mechanism that serves to provide a sense of security

---

<sup>41</sup> Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) p. 119.

<sup>42</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, translated by Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964) p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*', translated by Harry Zohn in Lawrence Venuti (ed), *The Translation Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004) pp. 75-85. p. 78.

<sup>44</sup> For more on Benjamin, translation and performance see Flloyd Kennedy, 'Shakespeare's Voice'.

<sup>45</sup> Frank Gauntlett, 'Thrilling Hamlet a Wealth of Riches', *Daily Telegraph Mirror* 25 June 1994, p. 108. The Armfield *Hamlet* is discussed by Kate Flaherty in *Ours as We Play It: Australia Plays Shakespeare* (Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2011) pp. 25-7.

<sup>46</sup> 'The Essence of Hamlet', *Sunday Telegraph* 26 June 1994, p. 171.

<sup>47</sup> YASSarts, 'Cullen – Max', 15 March 2014: <http://yassarts.org/theatre-performing-arts/max-cullen-actor-artist>, accessed 25 April 2014.

<sup>48</sup> John Rubin, 'The Six Ages of Voice', Sixth Voice Symposium 2000, keynote address, Australian Voice Association, Brisbane, 9 Oct 2000.

<sup>49</sup> It is not just the phonemes which signal variance between different accent communities; the phrasing, pacing and intonation also vary.

<sup>50</sup> Neil Armfield, 'A Great Spirit Now Returns to the Land', obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (17 October 2014): <http://www.smh.com.au/news/obituaries/a-great-spirit-now-returns-to-the-land/2005/09/23/1126982225436.html>, accessed 12 December 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Frank Gauntlett.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Heidegger, 'The Origin', p. 39.

<sup>55</sup> Frank Gauntlett.

<sup>56</sup> Charles Baudelaire, 'On the Essence of Laughter', translated by Jonathan Mayne in Robert Corrigan (ed) *Comedy: Meaning and Form* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965) p. 458.

<sup>57</sup> Rob Pensalfini, 'Not in Our Own Voices'.

<sup>58</sup> The convention of using upper class British accents for Shakespeare began in the late nineteenth century. See David Crystal, *Pronouncing Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Crystal is a linguist whose research suggests that Shakespeare and his actors spoke with a variety of regional British accents. Although the media simplistically refer to his proposed pronunciation as THE Original Pronunciation, it is – as Crystal himself admits – one possible, if highly probably, original pronunciation.